

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. Corresponding revisions to the claims have been made.

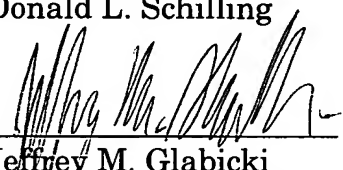
Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,680,785 (Akiyama et al.) in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,556,820 (Le et al.). With respect to Le et al., Applicant respectfully submits that the priority date of the present application, April 26, 1996, predates the publication and additionally, the filing date of Le et al., namely December 16, 1998. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that this combination is not permissible and therefore, the claims are allowable. Furthermore, new claims 23 and 24 have been added which further distinguish the claims from the prior art.

Reconsideration and entry of this amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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